

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDE-00 ERDE-00 TRSE-00
NRC-05 OMB-01 ERDA-05 AF-10 ARA-10 CIAE-00 EA-07
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NASA-01 NEA-10 NSAE-00
NSC-05 OIC-02 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 OES-07 SS-15
USIA-06 /140 W
-----113450 191238Z /47

P R 191151Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9911
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USMISSION NATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USNMR SHAPE
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 11840

USSALT TWO FOR WARNKE, USSCC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, GW
SUBJECT: CAUTIOUS PUBLIC REACTION BY FRG OFFICIALS TO
NEUTRON WARHEAD

REF: STATE 167615 DTG 190113Z JUL 77

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN VARIOUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, SENIOR FRG
OFFICIALS SUCH AS THE CHANCELLOR AND DEFENSE MINISTER
HAVE REACTED CAUTIOUSLY TO POSSIBLE FUTURE U.S. DEPLOY-
MENT OF NEUTRON WARHEADS IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER. THESE
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REACTIONS WERE OCCASIONED BY A SHORT NEWSPAPER ARTICLE
BY SPD GENERAL MANAGER BAHR IN WHICH HE WROTE THAT THE
SCALE OF VALUES HAD BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN AND THAT
"THE NEUTRON BOMB IS A SYMBOL OF THE PERVERSION OF
THINKING." SHOULD THE PRESIDENT DECIDE TO DEPLOY THE
WEAPON IN EUROPE, WE FORESEE THE NEED FOR CLOSE CONSUL-
TATIONS WITH THE GERMANS TO ENABLE THE FRG TO PRESENT A

CONVINCING RATIONALE TO THE PUBLIC THAT SUCH DEPLOYMENT IS IN THE GERMAN INTEREST. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO A DPA INTERVIEW WITH THE CHANCELLOR, SCHMIDT SAID NO MILITARY OR POLITICAL DECISIONS HAD YET BEEN MADE INVOLVING THE WHOLE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE REGARDING THE NEUTRON "BOMB" PLANNED BY THE UNITED STATES. SCHMIDT SAID HE DID NOT DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH PRESIDENT CARTER BECAUSE HE CONSIDERED IT PREMATURE FOR BONN TO TAKE A STAND BASED ON THE INFORMATION TO DATE.

2. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE SHARED BAHR'S VIEW, SCHMIDT SAID HE WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO ANALYZING THE WHOLE TOPIC IN A PROPER, SOBER CONTEXT. SCHMIDT THEN PLACED THE NEUTRON WARHEAD IN THE CONTEXT OF A NEW KIND OF SMALLER NUCLEAR WEAPON WHICH WAS EARMARKED FOR THE BATTLE-FIELD AND WHICH CAUSED A SMALLER BLAST AND LESS HEAT. IN SCHMIDT'S VIEW, HOWEVER, THESE NEW KINDS OF WARHEADS RAISED CONSIDERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND STRATEGIC PROBLEMS, BOTH WITHIN NATO AND IN THE ALLIANCE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE WARSAW PACT. HE CONTINUED THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING WHICH NEEDED TO BE CLEARED UP IN NATO IN JOINT DELIBERATIONS. IF THE U.S. WERE TO ANNOUNCE THE INTENTION OF STATIONING THIS NEW WEAPON ON GERMAN SOIL, SCHMIDT PROMISED THERE WOULD BE THOROUGH DISCUSSIONS
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WITHIN THE ALLIANCE AS WELL AS DIRECT GERMAN-AMERICAN TALKS.

3. IN ANOTHER DPA INTERVIEW, DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER HAS OPPOSED THE VIEW THAT NATO'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND PRINCIPALLY THE FRG HAVE A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON DEVELOPED IN THE U.S. LEBER SAID THE EUROPEANS HAD "NOT YET PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THEMSELVES" WITH THE SUBJECT OF THE NEUTRON WARHEAD. HE CONTINUED THAT THERE WAS NO GERMAN AT NATO HEADQUARTERS AUTHORIZED TO ANNOUNCE FRG VIEWS OF WHATEVER NATURE ON THE NEUTRON WARHEAD.

4. THE DEFENSE MINISTER POINTED OUT IT WAS STILL TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON. HE INDICATED IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE DISCUSSED WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, NOTING THAT THE MATTER HAD A "CERTAIN BACKGROUND." THE DEFENSE MINISTER SAID IT WAS KNOWN THAT THE EAST WAS INCREASING CONSIDERABLY A NUMBER OF ITS WEAPONS, CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS IN PARTICULAR. THE WEST DID NOT WANT SUPERIORITY OVER THE EAST, BUT IT HAD TO SECURE THE BALANCE BY MEANS OF PRECISION AND QUALITY.

HE SAID: "THIS APPLIES TO ALL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WEAPONS FIELD SO THAT ONE DOES NOT ONE DAY END UP IN A POSITION OF INFERIORITY."

5. FDP SECURITY AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN MOELLEMANN,

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ALSO CARRIED BY DPA, HAS SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THE VIEW HELD BY BAHR. MOELLEMANN SAID HE COULD NOT SEE WHY THE NEUTRON BOMB, FOR ALL ITS TERRORS, WAS "MORE PERVERSE" THAN THE HUGE STOCKPILES OF ATOMIC WEAPONS IN EAST AND WEST.

6. AN EDITORIAL WRITER IN "DIE WELT" (RIGHT-CENTER) BELIEVES THAT BAHR'S STATEMENT REPRESENTS THE OVERTURE TO SPD REJECTION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS AND THAT THE FRG MAY FACE A NEW, HARSH SECURITY DEBATE COMPARABLE TO THAT OF THE 50'S WHEN THE BUNDESWEHR WAS ARMED WITH NUCLEAR

DELIVERY SYSTEMS.

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7. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR FROM THE SCHMIDT AND LEBER COMMENTS CITED ABOVE THE FRG WISHES TO KEEP ITS OPTIONS OPEN ABOUT FUTURE DEPLOYMENT OF NEUTRON WARHEADS IN THE FRG -- ASSUMING THE PRESIDENT DECIDES TO DEPLOY -- UNTIL THE ALLIANCE HAS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE MATTER IN DEPTH. SINCE THE ISSUE HAS ENTERED THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, IT SEEMS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT THE GERMANS HAVE PERFORCE DISCOUNTED THE PREVIOUS NPG CONSULTATIONS (REF-TEL) ON THE ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON.

EGON BAHR'S ARTICLE IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE TYPE OF REACTION WHICH CAN BE ANTICIPATED IN THE FRG AS A RESULT OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE. IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WHETHER THE "WELT'S" EDITORIAL WRITER'S OPINION IS CORRECT THAT THE BAHR STATEMENT PRESAGES SPD REJECTION OF THE WEAPON. WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT JUDGMENT MAY BE TOO SWEEPING, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE WEAPON WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY OCCASION A HEATED DEBATE WITHIN PARTY CIRCLES BEFORE A POSITION IS ADOPTED.

IN ANY EVENT, BONN WILL FOLLOW CLOSELY THE PUBLIC DEBATE IN THE U.S., WITH SENIOR FRG OFFICIALS RELUCTANT TO TAKE A DEFINITIVE POSITION UNTIL THE PRESIDENT MAKES HIS DECISION WHETHER TO DEPLOY THE WEAPON AS PART OF NATO'S ARSENAL. SHOULD THE PRESIDENT DECIDE IN FAVOR OF DEPLOYMENT, THE U.S. MUST BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN INTENSIVE BILATERAL AS WELL AS MULTILATERAL CONSULTATIONS TO ENABLE THE FRG TO EXPLAIN TO THE PUBLIC HERE THE REASONS WHY SUCH WEAPONS ON GERMAN SOIL WILL ENHANCE FRG SECURITY AND MAKE DETERRENCE MORE CREDIBLE. END COMMENT. STOESEL

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Message Attributes

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